

DEVOTION FOR THE THIRD MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 119:129-136

Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them.

The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

I open my mouth and pant, longing for your commands.

Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name.

Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.

Redeem me from the oppression of men, that I may obey your precepts.

Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees.

Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen*

Old Testament Reading: Numbers 35:1-34 *Cities of refuge*

New Testament Reading: Acts 13:1-52 *Saul and Barnabas' missionary journey*

“GOD WORKS HIS WAY IN HIS TIME”

The missionary journey of Saul and Barnabas bore much fruit, as many Gentiles turned to the Lord through faith in Jesus. The effect of the gospel in bringing thousands of Gentiles to faith in Christ in the first century, was a sign of the power of God's word to create faith; and an affirmation of Jesus and the salvation God gives through faith in Him. The rapid spread of the gospel and its effect in creating faith in the hearts of the Gentiles, both turned the world upside down and showed that this truly was God's doing!

In a parable Jesus said the kingdom of God “*is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.*” The small seed that God planted in Galilee and Judea through Jesus' preaching, germinated on the day of Pentecost. It was sown throughout the Roman Empire through the preaching of the apostles, especially Saul and Barnabas, and became like a large tree, now spreading its branches throughout world.

What seemed sudden and explosive, had actually been centuries in the making. It began with the scattering of the Jewish people throughout the Babylonian Empire. Wherever the Jewish people lived, they read the scriptures and shared their message with their neighbours. Over the course of five centuries, the promise of the Messiah was made known among the nations. Saul and Barnabas shared the message that Jesus was the promised Messiah and saw thousands come to faith. As Jesus said “*Here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'*” The harvest Saul and Barnabas were blessed to see was centuries in the making. There may be a long time between the sowing and the reaping, but in God's garden a harvest is guaranteed!

“BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES” (CCLI #453681)

Chorus

**Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves;
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves;
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.**

**Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;
Waiting for the harvest and the time of reaping,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. Chorus**

**Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest and the labour ended,
We shall come rejoicing Bring in the sheaves. Chorus**

**Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,
Through the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;**

**When our weeping's over He will bid us welcome,
We shall come rejoicing, bring in the sheaves. Chorus**

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as you sent the 12 disciples to the towns and villages of Galilee you bid them to pray to the Lord of the harvest, to send more labourers, "*for the harvest is plentiful.*" You blessed the work of the early church, by raising a harvest among the nations. In the span of a few decades, Christian Communities were found in every part of the Roman World. The gospel has continued to bear fruit and your name is proclaimed by believers in every land. Encourage us as we sow the seed of faith by proclaiming you as Saviour. Give faith to those who hear and produce a harvest of eternal life in all who believe. In Your name. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven.

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,

Forever and ever. Amen

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

BENEDICTION

Isaiah 55:11

"The word that goes forth from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."